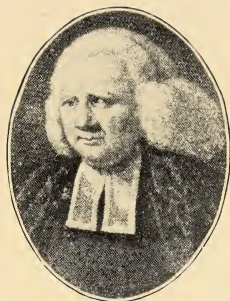


GEORGE WHITEFIELD

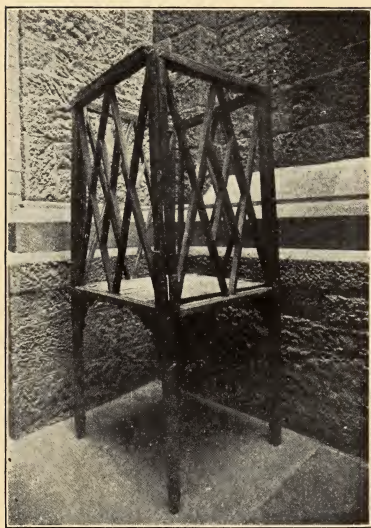
Gould
BX
9225
W4G73
1915

GOULD LIBRARY

Eastern Nazarene College



GEORGE WHITEFIELD.



WHITEFIELD'S FIELD-PULPIT.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2015

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE
OF
GEORGE WHITEFIELD

BY
REV. JOHN GREENFIELD, M. A.,
BROOKLYN, N. Y.

SECOND EDITION

PUBLISHED BY
A. O. STURGIS & CO.,
NAZARETH PA.

50011
2x
922-
04673
1915

FOREWORD.

The Christian Church in Europe and America has recently celebrated the bi-centennial of the birth of George Whitefield. In order to conserve the results of this observance as much as possible, the following articles, which were originally published in the official organ of our Church, *The Moravian*, are herewith presented in a more permanent form. This little book, be it noted, is in no sense a biography of the great Evangelist, but only, as the title indicates certain "*Lessons*" from his *Life* and *Labours*. That these pages may prove helpful to many Christian Workers is the prayer of

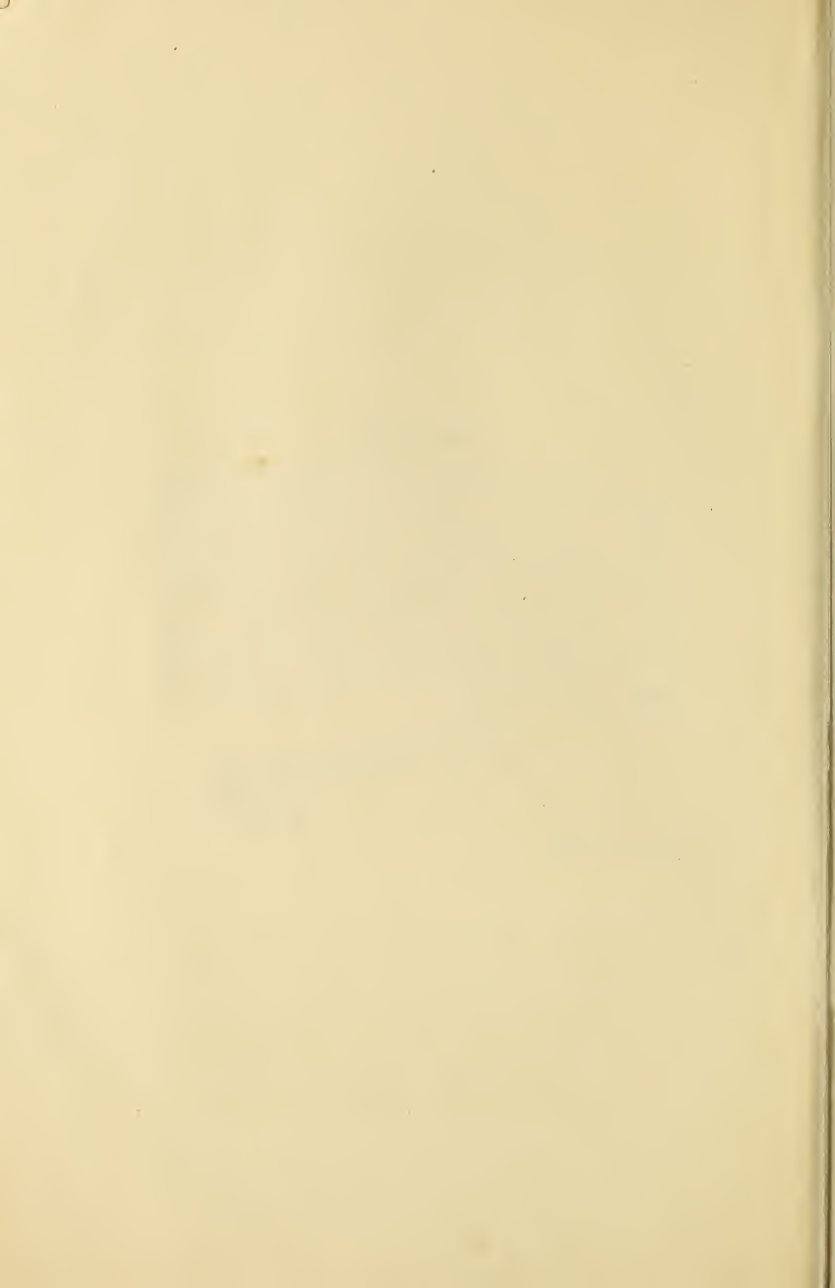
Yours in His service,

JOHN GREENFIELD,

347 Jay Street,

Brooklyn, N. Y.

March 1st, 1915



CHAPTER I.

Stranger Than Fiction.

Christendom may well observe the bi-centennial of this great preacher's birth. The story of the life and labors of George Whitefield reads like a romance. It furnishes another illustration of the popular saying that facts are often stranger than fiction. The following brief outline of Whitefield's wonderful career is found on his monument in the New England church which contains his bones and dust:

“This Cenotaph
is erected with affectionate veneration,
To the Memory of
The Rev. George Whitefield,
Born at Gloucester, England, December 16th, 1714,
Educated at Oxford University; ordained 1736.
In a ministry of thirty-four years,
He crossed the Atlantic thirteen times,
And preached more than eighteen thousand Sermons.
As a soldier of the cross, humble, devout, ardent,
He put on the whole armour of God:
Preferring the honour of Christ to his own interest,
repose, reputation and life.
As a Christian orator, his deep piety, disinterested
zeal, and vivid imagination,
Gave unexampled energy to his look, utterance and
action.
Bold, fervent, pungent, and popular in his eloquence,
No other uninspired man ever preached to so large
assemblies.
Or enforced the simple truths of the Gospel by motives
so persuasive and awful, and with an influence so
powerful
on the hearts of his hearers.
He died of asthma, September 30th, 1770;
Suddenly exchanging his life of unexampled labours
for his eternal rest.”

This epitaph was no ordinary post-mortem praise.
Whitefield's great religious contemporary, friend and

critic, John Wesley, bore him the following testimony: "Have we read or heard of any person since the apostles, who testified the gospel of the grace of God, through so widely extended a space, through so large a part of the habitable world? Have we read or heard of any person who called so many thousands, so many myriads of sinners to repentance? Above all, have we read or heard of any one, who has been a blessed instrument in the hand of God of bringing so many sinners from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God?"

Ancient mythology represented Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, as having sprung fully armed from the forehead of Jove. George Whitefield was ordained in the Church of England when only twenty-one years of age and with almost a single bound became the prince of pulpit orators. His first sermon, preached the Sunday after his ordination in the city of his birth, Gloucester, (the birthplace also of Robert Raikes, the famous founder of the modern Sunday-school), was said to have driven fifteen people mad. Bishop Benson quaintly remarked to the complainants that he hoped the madness might last till the next Sabbath. Several months later Whitefield is preaching to crowded churches in London "about the new birth and the necessity of renouncing all in order to follow Jesus Christ." Such multitudes thronged to hear him that the police had to stand guard. The next year he is crossing the Atlantic. Ministers and other Christian workers who have enjoyed an ocean voyage, can fully appreciate Whitefield's faithfulness and success as a soul-winner when they read in his biography of his evangelistic labors at sea: "Burning with love for souls he made that ocean voyage memorable. The cabin became a cloister the steerage a schoolroom, and the deck a church. He preached thrice a day and oftener on Sunday; and before his mighty appeals even the roughest tars bowed and bent like reeds in the wind."

And now he was fully launched on his marvelous and matchless career as a Heaven-sent messenger to the English speaking peoples of two continents. For nearly three decades and a half Whitefield swayed countless thousands of all classes and conditions. Not only did the common people hear him gladly, but the aristocracy of birth, wealth, learning and culture also sat at his feet with delight and profit. Learned and eloquent lords like Bolingbroke and Chesterfield, scientific sceptics such as David Hume and Benjamin Franklin, acknowledged the com-

elling power of his almost supernatural eloquence. The deadness and worldliness of his contemporary ecclesiastics however, soon closed the churches against him. Then it was, that, following in the footsteps of his Divine Master, he began, and became the modern pioneer of, open-air Gospel services. The Wesleys soon followed in Whitefield's footsteps. One of his biographers tells us:

"He was driven to the fields by the action of ecclesiastics. At Bristol, shut out from the churches, the taunt was flung at him, that if he would convert the heathen he might try his hand upon the Kingswood colliers. He took up the challenge, and on February 17th, 1739, he first attempted to speak to these wild men on that wild common near Bristol. A hundred of them came to stare at the eccentric stranger, but soon increased to twenty thousand; and down their grimy faces the tears rolled and left "white gutters" in the black soot."

Two extracts from Whitefield's journal will serve to indicate the success which attended this innovation:

"May 6th, 1739.—I preached at Kennington. Such a sight I never saw before. I believe there were no less than fifty thousand people, near four score coaches, besides great numbers of horses. There was an awful silence among the people. God gave me great enlargement of heart. I continued my discourse for an hour and a half."

"Went to public worship (in Church of England) twice, and preached in the evening to near sixty thousand people."

At another time he estimated his audience at one hundred thousand souls. The results of his evangelistic labors were truly marvelous. In one week he received upwards of a thousand letters from persons under deep conviction of sin. What that meant with the postal facilities of two centuries ago can scarcely be imagined by those who are enjoying the privileges of the present. In Philadelphia "the Court-House steps became his pulpit, and neither he nor the people wearied, although the cold winds of November blew upon them night after night." Of his work in that city the sceptically inclined Benjamin Franklin wrote: "The multitudes of all sects and denominations that attended his sermons were enormous, and it was a matter of speculation with me to observe the influence of his oratory on his hearers, and how much they respected him, notwithstanding his common abuse of them, assuring them that they were naturally half beasts and half

devils. It was wonderful to see the change soon made in the manners of our inhabitants. From being thoughtless and indifferent about religion, it seemed as if all the world was growing religious; so that one could not walk through the town in an evening without hearing Psalms sung in different families in every street."

Rev. John Newton, the great English hymn-writer of London, bore the following testimony to Whitefield's labors in the world's metropolis: "I bless God that I have lived in his time. Many were the winter mornings I have got up at four, to attend his Tabernacle services at five. I have seen Moorfields as full of lanterns at these times as I suppose Haymarket is full of flambeaux on an opera night. As a preacher, if any man were to ask me who was the second I ever had heard, I should be at some loss; but in regard to the first, Mr. Whitefield exceeds so far every other of my time, that I should be at none."

Whitefield's eloquence never waned. It was as persuasive and powerful when he was nearing sixty years of age as it had been in his early twenties. And all these wonderful (almost miraculous) results were achieved in the face of fierce and unrelenting persecution. Modern evangelists have the co-operation of thoroughly organized churches, carefully drilled choirs and personal workers, as well as the most extended notices of a favorable and influential press. Whitefield had none of these. Often alone and unheralded, frequently in danger of physical violence, including several attempts on his life, he fought the good fight of faith and finished his course as the world's greatest and most successful evangelist. The famous English poet, Cowper, set forth his sufferings and final victory in the following lines, written soon after Whitefield's death, and found in the well-known poem entitled "Hope":

"Leuconomos (beneath well-sounding Greek
I slur a name a poet must not speak)
Stood pilloried on infamy's high stage,
And bore the pelting scorn of half an age,
The very butt of slander, and the blot
For every dart that malice ever shot.
The man that mentioned *him*, at once dismissed
All mercy from his lips and stormed and hissed.
His crimes were such as Sodom never knew,
And Perjury stood up to swear all true.
His aim was mischief, and his zeal pretence;

His speech, rebellion against common sense;
A knave, when tried by honesty's plain rule,
And when by that of reason, a mere fool.
The world's best comfort was, his doom was passed,
Die when he might, he must be damned at last.

"Now, Truth, perform thine office! Waft aside
The curtain drawn by prejudice and pride.
Reveal (the man is dead) to wondering eyes
This more than monster in his proper guise.

"He loved the world that hated him; the tear
That dropped upon his Bible was sincere.
Assailed by scandal and the tongue of strife,
His only answer was a blameless life;
And he that forged and he that threw the dart,
Had each a brother's interest in his heart.
Paul's love of Christ, and steadiness unbribed,
Were copied close in him, and well transcribed.
He followed Paul; his zeal a kindred flame,
His apostolic charity the same;
Like him, crossed cheerfully tempestuous seas,
Forsaking country kindred, friends and ease;
Like him he labored, and, like him content
To bear it, suffered shame where'er he went.
Blush, Calumny, and write upon his tomb,
If honest eulogy can spare thee room,
Thy deep repentance of thy thousand lies,
Which, aimed at him, have pierced the offended skies;
And say: Blot out my sin, confessed, deplored,
Against Thine image in Thy saint, O Lord!"

CHAPTER II.

From Bar-Room to Pulpit.

hiding of his power?" These questions naturally spring up in the mind of every reader. Whitefield's greatness is now universally admitted, and his fame is certainly growing with the passing of the years. The world at large is coming to believe with Lord Bolingbroke, (the St. John

What was the secret of his Success? Wherein was "the of Pope's celebrated "Essay on Man") himself one of the greatest orators and philosophers of that day, that "Whitefield is the most extraordinary man of our times. He has the most commanding eloquence I ever heard in any person." And this was the golden age of British oratory. Those were the days of Lord Chatham and his illustrious son, William Pitt, of Edmund Burke and his famous rival Charles James Fox. And yet purely as an orator, Whitefield is said to have excelled them all. His natural gifts were indeed of the highest order. Dr. James Hamilton of London, has given us some idea of these in the following sentences:

"Whitefield was the prince of English preachers. Many have surpassed him as sermon-makers, but none have approached him as a pulpit orator. With a full and beam-ing countenance, and the frank and easy port which the English people love—for it is the symbol of honest purpose and friendly assurance—he combined a voice of rich compass, which could easily thrill over Moorfields in musical thunder, or whisper the terrible secret in every private ear; and to this gainly aspect and tuneful voice, he added a most expressive and eloquent action."

Another equally eminent critic, Dr. John Angell James, has given a somewhat similar description:

"Never was the joyful sound sent over the world by a more magnificent voice. All his biographers labor, as do the historians of Greece in describing the power of Demosthenes, to make us understand his wonderful oratory. Heaven rarely ever gave or gives to man the faculty of speech in such perfection. But what is particularly worthy of notice is, that he trusted not to its native power,

but increased that power by assiduous cultivation. His matchless elocution was not only an endowment, but an acquirement. If he preached a sermon twenty times, he went on to the last improving his method of delivering it, both as to tones and action; not for theatrical display—no man was ever more free from this—but to carry out this one thing: The Salvation of Souls."

Another testimonial from an American source is worthy of note. The good and gifted wife of New England's great theologian, Jonathan Edwards, wrote to her brother in New Haven:

"I want to prepare you for a visit from the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, the famous preacher of England. He is a truly remarkable man, and, during his visit, has, I think, justified all that we have heard of him. He is a born orator. You have already heard of his deep-toned, yet clear and melodious voice. It is perfect music. It is wonderful to see what spell he casts over an audience by proclaiming the simplest truths of the Bible. He speaks from a heart all aglow with love, and pours out a torrent of eloquence which is almost irresistible. I wish him success in his apostolic career."

But not all these natural gifts and graces are a sufficient explanation of his unexampled power. They had all been in vain for the salvation of souls if they had not been accompanied by the deepest kind of a personal experience of the grace of God in his own heart and life. St. Paul, Augustine, Luther and Bunyan were men of the highest type of human genius. But the world would scarcely have heard of them had it not been for that great experience of personal salvation with which each one of them was favored. Whitefield's great contemporary, John Wesley, was also a most extraordinary man. And yet it is doubtful if his name ever had survived to our day, had it not been for that great experience which came to him one evening in that little Moravian meeting in London, of which he wrote the well-known words:

"About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me, that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

A similar experience of personal salvation produced equally startling results in Whitefield's heart and life.

He had not enjoyed the godly training of the Wesleys, who were the children of truly pious parents in the ministry of the Church of England. Whitefield's father was a wine merchant. At the time of his father's death, Whitefield, a mere lad, mixed and sold drinks over the bar. Small wonder, then, that he was led into the following sins mentioned in his journal:

"I can remember such early strivings of corruption in my heart, as abundantly to convince me that I was conceived and born in sin,—that in me dwelleth no good thing by nature. I can date some very early acts of uncleanness. Lying, filthy talking, and foolish jesting I was much addicted to. Sometimes I used to curse, if not to swear. Numbers of Sabbaths have I broken. Much money have I spent in plays and in the common entertainments of the age. Cards and reading romances were my heart's delight." "All this while I continued in sin; and at length got acquainted with such a set of debauched, abandoned, atheistical youths, that if God by His free, unmerited and especial grace, had not delivered me out of their hands, I should long since have sat in the scorner's chair and made a mock of sin."

Whitefield, like John Bunyan, spent several years in an awakened and convicted condition, striving to attain righteousness by the deeds of the law and to obtain peace by Christian culture before he experienced the new birth. He himself tells us: "I knew no more that I must be born again in God, born again in Jesus Christ, than if I had never been born at all." "Being now near the seventeenth year of my age, I was resolved to prepare myself for the holy sacrament, which I received on Christmas Day. I began now to be more and more watchful over my thoughts, words and actions. I kept the following Lent, fasting Wednesday and Friday, thirty-six hours together. My evenings were generally spent in acts of devotion, and I constantly went to public worship twice a day. I was very diligent in reading and learning the classics, and in studying my Greek Testament, but was not yet convinced of the absolute unlawfulness of playing at cards, and of reading and seeing plays, though I began to have some scruples about it."

About a year later we find Whitefield at Oxford. Here, in the good providence of God, he fell in with the Wesleys and other members of the so-called "Holy Club." His association with these earnest and God-fearing young men

was productive of most excellent results and led ultimately to his conversion. The steps which preceded this great experience are fully described in the following extracts from his journal and letters:

"From time to time Mr. Wesley permitted me to come unto him, and instructed me as I was able to bear it. By degrees he introduced me to the rest of his Christian brethren. I now began, like them, to live by rule, and to pick up the very fragments of my time, that not a moment of it might be lost. Whether I ate or drank, or whatsoever I did, I endeavored to do all to the glory of God. The lively oracles of God were my soul's delight: I meditated therein day and night." "The world, and not themselves, gave them the title of Methodists, I suppose from their custom of regulating their time, and planning the business of the day every morning." "I must bear testimony to my old friend, Mr. Charles Wesley. He put a book into my hands called 'The Life of God in the Soul of Man,' whereby God showed me that I must be born again or be damned. I know the place: it may perhaps be superstitious, but whenever I go to Oxford I cannot help running to the spot where Jesus Christ first revealed Himself to me, and gave me the new birth. I learned that a man may go to church, say his prayers, receive the sacrament, and yet not be a Christian. How did my heart rise and shudder like a poor man that is afraid to look into his ledger lest he should find himself a bankrupt. "Shall I burn this book? Shall I throw it down? Or, shall I search it?" I did search it; and holding the book in my hand, thus addressed the God of Heaven and earth:

"Lord, if I am not a Christian, for Jesus Christ's sake show me what Christianity is, that I may not be damned at last!" I read a little further, and discovered that they who know anything of religion know that it is a vital union with the Son of God—Christ formed in the heart. O what a ray of divine life did then break in upon my soul! I fell a-writing to all my brethren and to my sisters. I talked to the students as they came into my room. I laid aside all trifling conversation. I put all trifling books away, and was determined to study to be a saint, and then to be a scholar." "From that moment God has been carrying on His blessed work in my soul. I am now fifty-five years of age, and shall leave you in a few days; but I tell you, my brethren, I am more and more con-

vinced that this is the truth of God, and that without it you can never be saved by Jesus Christ."

Thus, when twenty years of age, was George Whitefield born again, three years before the Wesleys, under Moravian preaching, experienced the same blessed change of regeneration. Charles Wesley, whom Henry Ward Beecher called the "Prince of English Hymn-Writers," has expressed this experience in the well-known lines, after he had caught "the heavenly vision":

"Arise, my soul, arise!
Shake off thy guilty fears;
The bleeding sacrifice
In my behalf appears;
Before the Throne my Surety stands;
My name is written on His hands."

"The Father hears Him pray,
His dear Anointed One;
He cannot turn away
The presence of His Son:
The Spirit answers to the Blood,
And tells me I am born of God."

CHAPTER III.

"Which Things We Preach."

"What we have seen and felt,
With confidence we tell,
And publish to the sons of men
The signs infallible."

So sang Charles Wesley, and so lived his good friend George Whitefield. He was indeed "a man with a message." Like John Bunyan, Whitefield might have said: "I preached what I felt, what I most smartingly did feel." George Whitefield's conversion resembled that of Martin Luther, who when he had passed through the experience of justification by faith exclaimed:

"Here I felt myself absolutely born again; the gates of Heaven were opened, and I had entered Paradise itself!"

As soon as Whitefield had experienced the new birth "the tone of his letters," his biographer tells us, "is different. The *New Birth* becomes a constant topic. The man, hitherto so gloomy and taciturn, is jubilant. His doleful and long-continued *miserere* is exchanged for songs of praise and thanksgiving." Hence the following, written immediately after his conversion:

"Bristol, June 12th, 1735. Were not your sighs on Sunday last some infant strugglings after the *New Birth*? Surely they were; and I trust ere long the Holy Ghost will replenish your heart with comfort and peace. Methinks I would willingly undergo the pangs, so you might enjoy the pleasure of the new birth; but this must not be. All we can do is to sympathize and pray for each other." Whitefield now knew from personal experience that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things have become new." Even before his conversion he had been led to put away once for all certain questionable practices and amusements. He writes in his journal:

"I was not fully satisfied of the sin of playing at cards and reading plays, till God upon a fast-day, was pleased to convince me. For, taking a play to read a passage out of it to a friend, God struck my heart with such power,

that I was obliged to lay it down again; and—blessed be His name!—I have not read any such books since.”

Whitefield was experiencing what Dr. Chalmers used to call “the expulsive power of a new affection.” In his very first sermon he struck the key-note of his entire ministry. It was: “*Ye must be born again.*” Not long before his death he wrote: “I remember when I began to speak against baptismal regeneration—in my first sermon, printed when I was about twenty-two years old—the first quarrel many had with me, was because I did not say that all people who were baptized were born again.”

His friend John Wesley in a ministry of upwards of half a century preached on an average seven sermons a year from the text “*Ye must be born again.*” When asked why he did this, his brief but final reply was: “Because you *must* be born again.”

When preaching Whitefield’s funeral sermon, Wesley said in closing:

“The fundamental doctrines on which he everywhere insisted, may they not be summed up as it were in two words, viz., *the New Birth* and *Justification by Faith*? These let us insist upon with all boldness, and at all times, in all places, in public and in private. Let us keep close to these good, old-fashioned doctrines, how many soever contradict or blaspheme.”

The faithfulness, perseverance and boldness with which Wesley and Whitefield preached to all audiences the necessity of the New Birth resulted in the conversion of hundreds of thousands, but also in fierce opposition and persecution. “It brought upon him,” as Whitefield’s biographer tells us, “the ridicule of wicked wits, and the displeasure of many, who imagined themselves Christians.” An illustration of this is found in an experience Whitefield had on his first visit to America. He wrote in his journal:

“Tuesday, October 21st. Preached at Suffield to several thousands of people. A great impression was made. I insisted much in my discourse upon the doctrine of the new birth, and also upon the necessity of a minister being converted before he could preach Christ aright. The word came with great power, and a general impression was made upon the people in all parts of the assembly. Many ministers were present, and most of them thanked me for my plain dealing. One of them, however, was offended;

and so would more of his stamp be, if I were to continue longer in New England."

At another time, "when preaching in the Old South Church in Boston, a large company of ministers being present, he changed his text and preached from our Lord's conference with Nicodemus. When he came to the words, "Art thou a master in Israel and knowest not these things?" he said: "The Lord enabled me to open my mouth boldly against unconverted ministers, to caution tutors to take care of their pupils, and also to advise ministers particularly to examine into the experiences of candidates for ordination. For I am verily persuaded that the generality of preachers talk of an unknown and unfelt Christ; and the reason why congregations have been so dead is because they have dead men preaching to them. O that the Lord may quicken and revive us, for His own name's sake! For how can dead men beget living children? It is true, indeed, God may convert men by the devil, if He pleases, and so He may by unconverted ministers; but I believe He seldom makes use of either of them for this purpose. No; the Lord will choose vessels made meet by the operations of the blessed Spirit for His sacred use."

Whitefield evidently saw very clearly and felt very strongly on this point, for one of his hostile critics said of him: "Mr. Whitefield seldom preached, but he had something or other in his sermon against unconverted ministers; and what he delivered had an evident tendency to fill the minds of the people with evil surmisings against ministers, as though they were for the most part carnal, unregenerate wretches. He often spake of them in the lump as Pharisees, enemies of Christ Jesus, and the worst enemies he had."

Whitefield also associated with himself in his American ministry the famous Presbyterian preacher, Rev. Gilbert Tennent. This modern John the Baptist had recently published his celebrated sermon on the danger of an unconverted ministry, in which he declared that much preaching was "powerless and unsavory," "too general," "soft and flattering," and therefore "unsuccessful." He told the people that the reason why they had seen so few cases of conviction or conversion among them was because "the bulk of their spiritual guides were stone blind and stone dead."

In 1740 Whitefield persuaded Tennent to act as his successor in Boston and in the Province of New England generally. His ministry was hardly less successful than Whitefield's had been. He seemed "to shake the country as with an earthquake. Wherever he came, hypocrisy and Phariseism either fell down before him, or gnashed their teeth against him. Cold orthodoxy also started from her downy cushion to imitate or to denounce him; for like Elijah on Mount Carmel, he made neutrality impossible."

A learned Bostonian Doctor of Divinity criticised this mighty revival in language, which has a strangely familiar sound:

"Whitefield has plagued us with a witness. It would be an endless attempt to describe the scene of confusion and disturbance occasioned by him; the divisions of families, neighborhoods and towns; the contrariety of husbands and wives; the undutifulness of children and servants; the quarrels among the teachers; the disorders of the night; the intermission of labor and business; the neglect of husbandry and the gathering of the harvest." "This show kept on all the while he was here. The town was ever alarmed; the streets were filled with people, with coaches, and chaises—all for the benefit of that holy man! The conventicles were crowded; but he rather chose the common, where multitudes might see him in all his *awful postures*." "After him came one Tennent,—a monster! impudent and noisy—and told them they were all *damned! damned! damned!* This charmed them; and in the most dreadful winter I ever saw, people wallowed in snow, night and day, for the benefit of his *bestly brayings*; and many ended their days under these fatigues. *Both of them carried more money out of these parts than the poor could be thankful for.*"

A few years ago in one of his famous Monday lectures Dr. Joseph Cook spoke as follows:

"George Whitefield once spoke to fifteen thousand people on yonder hill-slope on the new birth. The necessity of the new birth was a novel doctrine as taught by Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield in New England in 1740-42. The third chapter of St. John's Gospel was first made a living force in the evangelical churches of Great Britain and America by the great religious awakening under Whitefield and Wesley. And I say that it is my deliberate judgment that the recent loss of faith in the doctrine of the new birth—preached so emphatically by these

men and in all the great revivals—is a main hindrance to revivals at the present time.”

We have reason, however, to thank God for certain encouraging signs in this day and generation. Nearly all of our Evangelists preach the new birth. Quite recently Mr. Harold Begbie, the well-known author of a popular book entitled “Twice-Born Men,” spent a Sunday in New York. The forenoon found him in what he termed “the Millionaire’s Church” on Fifth Avenue of which Dr. J. H. Jowett is pastor. After a description of the large auditorium and the immense audience Mr. Begbie says:

“Some one had written to Dr. Jowett during the week asking if the leopard could change his spots, if a nature utterly corrupt and unamiable could in very truth be new-born. The sermon was an answer to this pathetic, anonymous appeal. The Church of Christ, he said, has to do what nobody else can do. It is original. It has no competitors. What is there in New York trying to make people over again? That is what Christ does. He makes people over again. Christ never once gave alms, not once in all his ministry. He gave life. He gave capacity. He made people over again. That same Sunday, in a hall crowded to suffocation with broken and mutinous humanity, I heard at night the same message, in English even more vigorous and burning, proclaimed by a daughter of William Booth. Miss Eva Booth, commander of the Army in the United States, and one of the most remarkable women in the world, poured out in a flood of burning, passionate words, the same message as Dr. Jowett gave to the millionaires. But with this difference. The miracle of conversion was not to be postponed, was not to be a matter of private experiment. It was to be sought then, immediately, without one moment’s delay!”

CHAPTER IV.

"Power From On High."

Whitefield was undoubtedly endowed with extraordinary natural gifts and graces. In addition to this he preached the Gospel of Christ with singular purity, which of itself is the "power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." But the marvelous results of his ministry can only be accounted for by his own deep experiences of personal salvation and the baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Calvary and Pentecost were to George Whitefield living realities. Before the twenty-one year old youth was ordained to the ministry he brought himself as a living sacrifice to be laid on the altar of consecration and service. His biographer tells us:

"Whitefield prepared himself for ordination by fasting and prayer; and on Saturday evening retired to a hill near Gloucester, where he prayed fervently for about two hours, in behalf of himself and those who were to enter into holy orders at the same time. On the following morning he was ordained. "I trust," he says, "I answered to every question from the bottom of my heart; and heartily prayed that God might say Amen. And when the Bishop laid his hands upon my head, if my vile heart doth not deceive me, I offered up my whole spirit, soul and body to the service of God's sanctuary. Let come what will, life or death, depth or height, I shall henceforth live like one who this day, in the presence of men and angels, took the holy sacrament, upon the profession of being inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon me the ministration in the Church. I can call Heaven and earth to witness, that when the Bishop laid his hand upon me, I gave myself up to be a martyr for Him, who hung upon the cross for me. Known to Him are all future events and contingencies; I have thrown myself blindfold and I trust without reserve into His Almighty hands."

The young preacher seemed to have had a presentiment that he must be a martyr if he would be a faithful witness. Indeed, the two words were at one time synonymous. The glorious company of the Apostles and the noble army of

martyrs found it so. Thus also did Whitefield and the Wesleys. The times in which these men of God lived were indeed evil. Protestant Christianity seemed on the verge of a complete collapse. Laxity in doctrine and looseness of morals were universally prevalent both in Church and State. Bishop Butler, the famous author of the "Analogy," declared:

"It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted, by many persons, that Christianity is not so much a subject of inquiry; but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious." It was just about this time that Voltaire was predicting that in the next generation Christianity would be overthrown and unknown throughout the whole civilized world. He had said: "It took twelve men to set up Christianity; it would only take one" (conceitedly referring to himself) "to overthrow it." And, indeed, there seemed to be some reason for this fearful prediction. There had been a terrible reaction from the revival times of the Reformation and the thorough-going piety of the Puritans. The pendulum had swung to the other extreme of liberalism, license and licentiousness. This was the time when Blackstone, the legal commentator, went successively to hear every clergyman of note in London, and heard not one discourse which had more Christianity in it than the writings of Cicero. Unitarianism, formalism, rationalism had robbed Christianity of all its vital and essential truths. "Like people, like priest." "Intoxication was a vice very characteristic of the cloth. On one occasion the Bishop reproved one of his Chester clergy for drunkenness. He replied: "But, my Lord, I never was drunk on duty." "On duty!" exclaimed the Bishop; "and pray, sir, when is a clergyman not on duty?" "True," said the other; "my Lord, I never thought of that." Bishop Ryle has well said:

"The Church slept. The Dissenters slept. The pulpit slept. The religious press slept. The gates were left wide open. The walls were left unguarded. Infidelity stalked in. The devil sowed tares broadcast, and walked to and fro. The gentry gloried in their shame, and no man pointed out their wickedness. The people sinned with a high hand, and no man taught them better. Ignorance, profligacy, irreligion and superstition were to be seen everywhere. Such were the times when Whitefield was raised up." Another biographer tells us:

"Judging from the description we have of men and manners in those days, a gentleman might have been de-

fined as a creature who got drunk, gambled, swore, fought duels, and violated the seventh commandment, and for all this very few thought the worse of him."

Such was the horribly rotten condition of English society when Whitefield began to preach and in one of his first sermons he hurled the following thunder-bolts:

"Flee drunkenness! Flee drunkenness, since he that committeth that crime sinneth against his own body. Who hath pains in the head? Who hath rottenness in the bones? Who hath redness of eyes? He that tarries long at the wine; he that rises early to seek new wine. How many walking skeletons have you seen, whose bodies were once exceeding fair to look upon; but, by this sin of drinking, how has their beauty departed from them, as though God intended to set them up, as He did Lot's wife, for monuments of His justice?

"Think ye, O ye drunkard, that you shall be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light? No; as by drunkenness you have made your hearts cages of unclean birds, with unclean spirits must you dwell. A burning Tophet, kindled by God's wrath, is prepared for your reception, where you must suffer the vengeance of an eternal fire, and in vain cry out for a drop of water to cool your tongues. Indeed, you shall drink,—but it shall be the cup of God's fury. I call Heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that, as surely as the Lord rained fire and brimstone upon Sodom, so surely will He cast you into a lake of fire and brimstone, when He shall come to take vengeance on them that know not God, and have not obeyed the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Behold, I have told you before. Remember you were this day informed what the end of drunkenness would be. And I summon you, in the name of that God, whom I serve, to meet me at the judgment-seat of Christ, that you may acquit both my Master and me; and confess, with your own mouths, that your damnation was of yourselves, and that we were freed from the blood of you all."

How was such preaching received? To thousands, yea, hundreds of thousands, it came as an awakening voice from the throne of the Almighty. Multitudes fled for refuge to Jesus Christ, and made haste to lay hold upon the hope set before them in the Gospel. The majority, however, hardened themselves, and many were filled with wild and Satanic rage. A few illustrations of the persecution

that broke out upon Whitefield and the Wesleys must suffice:

"The curate of Colne, Lancashire, issued the following proclamation: 'If any man be mindful to enlist under the command of the Rev. Geo. White for the defence of the Church of England, let him repair to the Cross, where he shall have a pint of ale in advance and other proper encouragements.' And the mob that this minister raised pelted Wesley with stones, rolled his companions in the mud, and dragged one through the street by his hair, inflicting injuries from which he never recovered."

Surely, Whitefield and his helpers foresaw the martyrdom of witnessing. A more than thirty years' war was waged against Whitefield not only by an apostate pulpit and Church, but also by every form of organized evil, such as the theatre, the liquor traffic, the dance hall and the house of ill fame. In pamphlets and plays innumerable he was the butt of constant ridicule and persecution. Take the following as a fair sample:

"Behold, here comes one of the 'righteous over-much'—yet nought doth *he* give away in charity! No, No! He is the bell-wether of the flock, who hath broken down *orthodoxy's bounds*, and now riots on the common of *hypocrisy*. With *one* eye he looks to Heaven, to make his congregation think he is *devout*; that's his *spiritual* eye. With the other eye he looks down to see what he can get, and that's his *carnal* eye. Thus, with jokes flowing down his face he says, or seems to say, or, at least, with your permission, we'll attempt to say for him, "Bretheren! *Bretheren!* BRETHEREN!" (The word Bretheren comes from his Tabernacle, because we all *Breathe-there-in*): "If ye want *rouzing*, I'll *rouze* you. I'll beat a *tat-too* upon the parchment of your consciences, and whip the *devil* about like a *whirl-a-gig*."

"He knows his *Master's* realm so well,
His sermons are a *map* of hell,
An *Ollio* made of conflagration,
Of *gulphs* of brimstone and *damnation*,
Eternal torments, *furnace*, *worm*,
Hell-fire' a *whirlwind*, and a *storm*."

How was it possible for Whitefield to face a world and a Church in arms, and win so many and such glorious victories for the Cross? The explanation is the same as in

the case of the Apostles in Jerusalem, a few and feeble folk, facing the opposition and persecutions of Jews, Greeks and Romans. The Master had told them: "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Thus they were given "mouth and wisdom, which all their adversaries were not able to gainsay or resist," "the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following."

This was also the happy experience of Whitefield, the Wesleys and their associates. They were endued with power from on High." Whitefield's biographer has described one of their many Pentecostal experiences in the following incident:

"Whitefield began the New Year (1739) as gloriously as he ended that which had just expired. He received Sacrament, preached twice, expounded twice, attended a Moravian Love Feast in Fetter Lane, where he spent the whole night in prayer to God, psalms and thanksgivings; and then pronounced 'this to be the happiest New Year's Day he had ever seen.'

"This Love Feast at Fetter Lane was a memorable one. Besides about sixty Moravians, there were present not fewer than seven of the Oxford Methodists, namely, John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, Westley Hall, Benjamin Ingham, Charles Kinchin and Richards Hutchins, all of them ordained clergymen of the Church of England. Wesley writes: 'About three in the morning, as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as we were recovered a little from that awe and amazement at the presence of his Majesty, we broke out with one voice—'We praise thee, O God; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord!'"

CHAPTER V.

"Individual Work for Individuals."

George Whitefield was without doubt one of the greatest "masters of assemblies" that the world has ever known. The eulogy of Augustus Toplady, the famous author of "Rock of Ages," is not extravagant:

"England has had the honor of producing the greatest men, in almost every walk of useful knowledge. At the head of these are: 1.—Milton, the prince of poets; 2.—Sir Isaac Newton, the prince of philosophers, and 3.—Whitefield, the prince of preachers."

Not only, however, was he unrivalled as a pulpit orator; he was almost equally great in doing personal work, in winning men for Christ, one by one. After his first campaign in Philadelphia, where Benjamin Franklin tells us that he preached to as many as thirty thousand people in the open air, and was the means of changing the morals of the whole city and country round about, we are happily informed of the following incident:

"Before Mr. Whitefield left Philadelphia, he was desired to visit one who was under a deep sense of sin, from hearing him preach. In praying with this person, he was so carried beyond himself, that the whole company (which were about twenty) seemed to be filled with the Holy Ghost, and magnified the God of Heaven."

Another biographer tells us:

"On one occasion, when a young minister, afterwards exceedingly popular and useful, was visiting him, he was sent for to visit a poor woman, who had been so dreadfully burnt that she could not survive many hours. He went immediately and prayed with her. He had no sooner returned, than she called out, "Oh, where is Mr. Whitefield?" Urged by her entreaty, her friends requested him to visit her a second time. He complied, and again prayed with her. The poor, afflicted woman continued still to desire his presence. When her friends came for him the third time, "I begged of him," said the young clergyman, "not to go; for he could scarcely expect to do any good. Your nerves are too weak, your feelings are too acute to

endure such scenes." I shall never forget his mild reproof: "Leave me; my Master can save to the uttermost, to the very uttermost."

Once he was most kindly entertained at the home of a British nobleman, who had become much interested in the wonderful preacher. Whitefield, however, felt that his good friend was still out of Christ; and as he found no suitable opportunity for a personal interview, he wrote with the diamond of his ring on the window-pane of the guest-chamber the words: "*One thing thou lackest.*" The arrow found its mark and led to the good Churchman's thorough conversion.

It must not be supposed, however, that he was always successful in his dealings with individuals. Some hardened themselves and refused to receive his well-meant admonition. Once when he was travelling in company with a Christian man, they had occasion to stay for a night at a road-side tavern. After they had retired, they were greatly annoyed by a company of gamblers, who were in an adjoining room. Whitefield could not rest, and told his friend that he would go into the room and reprove them for their conduct. The other remonstrated against his doing so, but in vain. He went; and unhappily, his words fell apparently powerless upon them. Returning, he lay down to sleep. "What," asked his companion, "did you gain by your trouble?" Whitefield characteristically answered, "*A soft pillow.*"

Whitefield's days and nights were taken up by public services and private interviews with anxious, convicted persons. From Edinburgh he wrote:

"Every morning I have a levee of wounded souls. At seven in the morning we have a lecture in the fields, attended not only by the common people, but persons of great rank. I have reason to think several of the latter are coming to Jesus. Little children also are much wrought upon. Congregations consist of many thousands. I preach twice daily in the fields, and expound in private houses at night, and am employed in speaking to souls under distress the greater part of the day."

Rich and poor, high and low, sought him out in his privacy to receive special instruction and intercession. Whitefield held an official position as Chaplain to the Countess of Huntingdon. It was in her chapel that almost all of England's nobility and royalty gathered to hear him. The author of "The Life and Times of the

Countess of Huntingdon," gives an instance of Whitefield's association with every class and condition of persons in order to impart spiritual counsel and encouragement:

"While the rich assembled in her ladyship's drawing-room, the poor filled her kitchen. Certain ladies, having called to pay a visit to the Countess, she asked them if they had heard Mr. Whitefield preach; and upon being answered in the negative, she expressed a wish that they should attend his preaching on the day following. The ladies did so; and the Countess, when they next met, inquired how they liked him. "O my lady," they replied, "of all the preachers we ever heard, he is most strange and unaccountable. Among other preposterous things, he declared that Jesus Christ is so willing to receive sinners, that He does not object to receive *even the devil's castaways!* My lady, did you ever hear of such a thing since you were born?" Her ladyship acknowledged that the language was a little singular, but, as Mr. Whitefield was in the house, she would send for him, and he should answer for himself. Whitefield came. The previous conversation was repeated; and he said: "My lady, I must plead guilty to the charge. Whether I did right or otherwise, your ladyship shall judge from the following circumstance. Half an hour ago, a poor, miserable-looking, aged female requested to speak with me. I desired her to be shown into your parlor. She said: "Oh, sir, I was accidentally passing the door of the chapel where you were preaching last night, and I went in, and one of the first things I heard you say was, that Jesus Christ was so willing to receive sinners, that He did not object to receiving the devil's castaways. Now, sir, I have been on the town many years, and am so worn out in his service, that, I think, I may with truth be called *one of the devil's castaways.* Do you think, sir, that Jesus Christ would receive me?" "I," said Whitefield, "assured her there was not a doubt of it, if she was but willing to go to Him." The sequel of the story was, that the poor creature was converted, and died testifying that the Blood of Christ can cleanse from all unrighteousness.

Whitefield's willingness to converse with inquirers at all hours of the day or night once nearly cost him his life. He gives the following account of this in a letter from Plymouth, where it happened:

"I betook myself to my private lodgings, and being gone to rest, after preaching to a large congregation, and visiting the French prisoners, the good woman of the house came and told me, that a well-dressed gentleman desired to speak with me. Imagining that he was some Nicodemite, I desired he might be brought up. He came and sat down by my bedside, told me he was a lieutenant of a man of war, congratulated me on the success of my ministry, and expressed himself much concerned for being detained from hearing me. He then asked me if I knew him? I answered, No. He replied, his name was Cadogan. I rejoined, that I had seen one Mr. Cadogan, who was formerly an officer in Georgia, about a fortnight ago, at Bristol. Upon this, he immediately rose up, uttering the most abusive language, calling me dog, rogue, villain, etc., and beat me most unmercifully with his gold-headed cane. My hostess and her daughter, hearing me cry 'Murder,' rushed into the room, and seized him by the collar; but he immediately disengaged himself from them, and repeated his blows upon me. The cry of murder was repeated, and he made towards the door, from which the good women pushed him downstairs."

Not only did Whitefield labor constantly by personal interviews for the conversion of individuals, but he also carried on a most extensive correspondence. In one week, as has been stated, he received more than one thousand letters from persons desiring spiritual guidance. This of course required an immense expenditure of time and labor. Extracts from two such letters, among many thousands, must suffice. A young British nobleman, Sir Rowland Hill, was studying theology at Cambridge. Here he began to visit the sick and the prisoners, as well as to do personal work among his fellow-students. This brought upon him the severest censure of his College. Mobs also commenced to insult him; and at length the opposition he encountered became so severe that he wrote to Whitefield for advice. In his reply the great Evangelist said:

"About thirty-four years ago, the Master of Pembroke College, where I was educated, took me to task for visiting the sick, and going to the prisons. In my haste I said: 'Sir, if it displeaseth you, I will go no more.' My heart smote me immediately. I repented, and went again. He heard of it, and threatened me; but, for fear he should be looked upon as a persecutor, let me alone. The hearts of all are in the Redeemer's hands. I would not have you

give way, no, not for a moment. The storm is too great to hold long. Visiting the sick and the imprisoned, and instructing the ignorant, are the very vitals of true and undefiled religion. If threatened, denied degree, or expelled for this, it will be the best degree you can take—a glorious preparative for, and a blessed presage of, future usefulness. I have seen the dreadful consequences of giving way and looking back. How many, by this wretched cowardice, have been turned into pillars, not of useful, but of useless salt! Now is the time to prove the strength of Jesus yours! If opposition did not so much abound, your consolations would not so much abound. Blind as he is, Satan sees some good coming. We never prospered so much at Oxford, as when we were hissed at and reproached as we walked along the streets. *Go on, therefore, my dear man, go on.*”

In one of his many letters to his life-long friend, Benjamin Franklin, we find another illustration of Whitefield’s faithfulness and zeal:

“I find you grow more and more famous in the learned world. As you have made a pretty considerable progress in the mysteries of electricity, I would now humbly recommend to your diligent, unprejudiced pursuit and study, *the mystery of the new birth*. It is a most important, interesting study, and when mastered, will richly answer and repay you for all your pains. One, at whose bar we are shortly to appear, hath solemnly declared that, *without it*, we cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven. *You* will excuse this freedom. I must have *aliquid Christi*—something of Christ, in all my letters.”

CHAPTER VI.

"In Labors More Abundant."

"Through his abundant toils, with fixt amaze,
We see revived the work of ancient days.
In his unspotted life with joy we see
The fervors of primeval piety:
A pattern to the flock by Jesus bought,
A living witness of the truths he taught,—
He showed the man regenerate from above
By fraudless innocence and childlike love.
For friendship formed by nature and by grace,
(His heart made up of truth and tenderness)
Stranger to guile, unknowing to deceive,
In anger, malice or revenge to live,
Betwixt the mountain and the multitude,
His life was spent in prayer and doing good."

Thus wrote the great Christian poet, Charles Wesley, of his good friend George Whitefield. And surely, no student of Whitefield's life can fail to be struck by his untiring and amazing industry. There was not a lazy bone or muscle in his body. He was emphatically "all at it, and at it always," as far as the King's business was concerned. Like St. Paul, he chose the most difficult fields of labor. At the early age of twenty-two he declined the call to a large parish in London, and some years later he refused a comfortable home in Philadelphia, where a congregation offered him the large sum of \$4,000.00 a year, with six months' vacation annually for evangelistic work. He chose to be an itinerant preacher, travelling constantly on horseback, in coaches, or on boats and sailing vessels.

On one of his many evangelistic tours in America he wrote to an aged veteran from North Carolina:

"I am here hunting in the woods—these ungospelized wilds—for sinners. It is pleasant work, though my body is weak and crazy. But after a short fermentation in the grave, it will be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. The thought of this rejoices my soul and makes me long to leap my seventy years. I sometimes think all will go

to Heaven before me. Pray for me as a dying man, but, oh, pray that I may not go off as a snuff. I would fain die blazing—not with human glory, but with the love of Jesus!”

The late Dr. A. T. Pierson has well said of Whitefield:

“His fondness for his work made his labor a relief and rest. He never spared himself; and when failing health compelled him to put himself on short allowance, he preached only once a day and thrice on Sundays. He counted not his life dear unto himself, and left a maxim worthy of Saint Paul: ‘We are immortal till our work is done.’”

On one of his fourteen visits to Scotland, Whitefield wrote from Edinburgh to a friend:

“Yesterday I preached three times, and lectured at night. This day Jesus has enabled me to preach seven times; once in the church, twice at the girls’ hospital, once in the park, once at the old people’s hospital, and afterwards twice at a private house. Notwithstanding I am now as fresh as when I arose in the morning. ‘They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up on wings like eagles.’ It would delight your soul to see the effects of the power of God, both in the church and park the Lord was with us. The girls in the hospital were exceedingly affected, and so were the standers by. One of the mistresses told me, she is now awakened in the morning by the voice of prayer and praise. The master of the boys says, that they meet together every night to sing and pray; and when he goes to their rooms at night, to see if all be safe, he generally disturbs them in their devotions. The presence of God at the old people’s hospital was really very wonderful. The Holy Spirit seemed to come down like a mighty, rushing wind. The mourning of the people was like the weeping in the valley of Hadad-Rimmon. They appear more and more hungry. Every day I hear of some fresh good wrought by the power of God. I scarce know how to leave Scotland. Saints have been stirred up and edified; and many others, I believe, are translated from darkness to light, and from the Kingdom of Satan to the Kingdom of God. The good that has been done is inexpressible. I am intimate with three noblemen and several ladies of quality, who have a great liking for the things of God. I am now writing in an Earl’s house, surround-

ed with fine furniture; but, glory be to free grace, my soul is in love only with Jesus."

No wonder that Whitefield returned from his herculean labors in Scotland with a seemingly incurable throat-trouble the natural result of excessive open-air speaking. He wrote on one occasion from Edinburgh:

"By preaching always twice, once thrice, and once four times in a day, I am quite weakened, but I hope to recruit again. I am burning with a fever, and have a violent cold; but Christ's presence makes me smile at pain; and the fire of His love burns up all fevers."

Six years later, after another extended evangelistic tour in Scotland, he declared:

"Ever since I came from the North, I have had a violent cold and a sore throat, which threatened an inflammatory quinsy. One physician prescribed a *perpetual blister*, but I have found *perpetual preaching* to be a better remedy. When this grand catholicon fails, it is all over with me."

And two years later he wrote the following letter to his good friend in Germany, Professor August Herrmann Francke, the famous Pietistic preacher and father of the orphans, in all respects a kindred spirit:

"London, March 5th, 1758.

"Most Reverend and Dear Sir:

"Through grace the fields are as ready to harvest as ever. In the summer I range; and with a table for my pulpit, and the Heavens for my sounding-board, I am enabled, generally thrice a day, to call to many thousands to come to Jesus that they may have life. In the winter I am confined to London; but to my great mortification, through continual vomitings, want of rest, and of appetite, I have been reduced for some time to the short allowance of preaching only once a day, except Sundays, when I generally preach thrice. Thousands attend every evening at both ends of the town; and on Sundays, many, many go away for want of room. The Divine presence is amongst us, and every week produces fresh instances of the power of converting grace.

Blessed be God, we meet with no disturbances in town, and very seldom in the country. But last year, while I was preaching in the fields in Ireland, a popish mob was so incensed at my proclaiming the Lord our Righteousness, and at my praying for our good old king, and the king of Prussia, that they surrounded, stoned, and almost

killed me. But we are immortal till our work is done. Glad should I have been to have died in such a cause!

"Mr. Wesley has societies in Ireland and elsewhere; and, though we differ a little in some principles, yet brotherly love continues. When itinerating, I generally preach among his people, as freely as among those who are called our own. In London several new flaming preachers are come forth; and we hear of others in various parts of the kingdom, who seem determined to know and to preach nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

"Thousands and thousands are now praying daily for success to the Prussian and Hanoverian arms. Your fast-days were kept here with great solemnity; and will be so again, God willing, when I know the day. Our Joshuas are in the field. Many a Moses is gone up into the Mount to pray. He, Who wrought such wonders for the Prussian monarch last year, can repeat them this year. The distresses of German Protestants we look upon as our own. We have also endeavored to give thanks for the great mercy vouchsafed your Orphan Houses and the Protestant cause."

Nine years before his home-going Whitefield broke down completely and had to refrain from preaching for nearly twelve months. But this school of affliction proved, as is usually the case, a means of the greatest blessing to himself and others. His prayers and his pen were continually being employed in the service of the King. The following words were written to a brother-minister:

"Accept a few lines of love unfeigned from a worthless worm, just returning from the borders of the eternal world. O into what a world was I launching! But the prayers of God's people have brought me back. Lord Jesus, let it be for Thy glory and the welfare of precious and immortal souls! O how ought ministers to work before the night of sickness and death comes, when no man can work!"

Another friend received the following message:

"I am still in this dying world, but frequently tempted to wish the report of my death had been true, since my disorders keep me from my old, delightful work of preaching. But Jesus can teach us to exercise our passive as well as active graces. Fain would I say, 'Thy will be done!' I know now what nervous disorders are. Blessed be God that they were contracted in His service!"

But a year later he is in the harness again and doing the work of two ordinary preachers, as the following lines indicate:

"Through Divine mercy, preaching four or five times a week has not hurt me; and twice or thrice I have been enabled to take the field; in my opinion, a greater honor than to be monarch of the universe. How gladly would I bid adieu to ceiled houses and vaulted roofs! Mounts are the best pulpits, and the Heavens the best sounding-boards."

Surely such a worker had earned the right to speak to certain easy-going and worldly professors in the following style:

"God convert you from lying a-bed in the morning! God convert you from conformity to the world! God convert you from lukewarmness! Do not get into a cursed Antinomian way of thinking, and say, 'I thank God, I was converted twenty or thirty years ago; and though I can go to a public house, and play at cards, yet I am converted, for once in Christ, always in Christ.' Whether you were converted formerly or not, you are perverted now. Would you have Jesus Christ catch you napping, with your lamps untrimmed? Suffer the word of exhortation. I preach feelingly. I could be glad to preach, till I preached myself dead, if God would convert you. I seldom sleep after three in the morning; and I pray every morning, 'Lord, convert me, and make me more a new creature to-day!'"

CHAPTER VII.

Some Modern Miracles.

"Suffice that for the season past,
Hell's horrid language filled our tongues;
We all Thy words behind us cast,
And loudly sang the drunkard's songs.
But, oh, the power of grace Divine!
In hymns we now our voices raise;
Loudly in strange Hosannahs join,
And blasphemies are turned to praise!"

—Wesley.

It is questionable whether anybody really believes in miracles until he has experienced the miracle of regeneration. Up to the time of his own conversion George Whitefield was as ignorant as a heathen with reference to this greatest of all miracles—"the life of God in the soul of man." We recall his own words:

"I knew no more that I must be born again in God, born again in Jesus Christ, than if I had never been born at all."

Does not this practical ignorance of regeneration, this well-nigh universal lack of the experience of the new birth, the birth from above, account for the modern tendency in so many pulpits and theological seminaries to eliminate the supernatural, to take out not only of the Old but also of the New Testament, everything that can not be explained by pure reason, beginning with the denial of the fall of man and ending with doubts as to the resurrection of our Lord. Does not the lack of a personal experience of regeneration explain why the famous Methodist editor, Dr. James M. Buckley, recently could declare:

"For twenty years I have not heard a real sermon on such a topic as the new birth."

But evil as these days are, the times in which Whitefield lived were worse. In order to appreciate the spiritual and moral miracles, which God wrought by the preaching of Whitefield and his associates, let us glance once more at the awful social depravity and religious apostasy of that age:—

It was the England of Sir Robert Walpole. The great Peace Minister's rule had brought much outward prosperity. Wages were good, taxes light, and trade extending daily. The sleek, fat faces in the portraits of the period speak of abundance of beef, beer, and good plum porridge. But with prosperity there had come a feeling of well-fed somnolence; the spirit was subdued to the flesh; there was only too much to justify Carlyle's bitter phrase: "*Soul extinct; stomach well alive*" The drunkenness of the age was proverbial. Not a single class in the country seemed to be free from this vice. Walpole was a drunkard; so was his great opponent Lord Bolingbroke. The country squires were sodden with alcohol; they were most of them "six-bottle men." All business was transacted in taverns, and the typical merchant of the period constantly enters into his diary sentences like these: "*Got very drunk;*" "*Undoubtedly the worse for drinking;*" "*Cannot say I came home sober;*" etc.

"*Drunk for 1d, dead drunk for 2d, clean straw for nothing!*" so ran one tempting tavern sign. When the straw was full, the pavement outside was covered with senseless forms.

Another characteristic of the age was its extraordinary coarseness. In fashionable circles *filth* was regarded as the choicest form of wit. *The stage* seemed to exist for nothing but to *preach and propagate vice*, and almost all the literature of the time was stamped with *the mark of the Beast*."

"Side by side with uncleanness went a passion for *cruelty*. Bulls were beaten in every village, and even on Cathedral greens. Even the clergy kept fighting-cocks, and sometimes recorded their victories in the *Parish Registers*. Other ways of torturing animals all had their attractions; but the favorite form of amusement was an *execution*. All London turned out Mondays for the Tyburn hangings, and fashionable people paid for seats on the grand stand. There were 253 *capital offences* on the Statute Book. The poor criminals slowly choked to death, for no drop was allowed, and it took a man *a good half hour to die*."

"Meanwhile the London clergy were dignified and respectable, and often men of great learning. Christianity was to them the highest form of Rationalism. "*It requires only such duties of us,*" said one of the leading preachers, "*as are suitable to the light of nature, and do*

approve themselves to the best reason of mankind." Their boast was that they "*let alone the mysterious points of religion, and preached to the people only good, plain, practical morality.*"

Non-conformity had even less spiritual life than the Church. Many of the *Baptist*, and most of the *Presbyterian congregations* were rapidly drifting into the new *Unitarian sect.*" Alas, it was the *Glacial Epoch in our Church History!*" It may well be asked what force it was which prevented England, and indeed the whole English-speaking world, from plunging over the precipice into the black abyss of French atheism and socialistic anarchy? Secular history tells us that it was "*The Great Revival,*" under the leadership of George Whitefield and his associates. Verily "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save," then, as always, "them that believed," and it was this company of converted, regenerate people, in Europe and America, that preserved society from putrefaction. They were indeed "the salt of the earth."

Several weeks ago the writer of these lines had the privilege of looking upon Whitefield's "*field-pulpit,*" now the property of the American Tract Society. This portable pulpit, made of pine wood, is so contrived that it can be easily taken apart and put together. The great preacher delivered more than two thousand sermons from this pulpit in the fields of England, Scotland, Ireland and America. He once remarked that the Gospel had been *preached from that pulpit to more than ten millions of people.* Whitefield's field-pulpit! What a throne it was! What a Gospel was here declared, and what a tongue of fire proclaimed it! What signs and wonders did it not witness! Could that little field-pulpit speak, of how many thousands of convicted and heart-broken sinners would it not tell, and also of their joyful assurance of pardon by faith in the Blood of the Lamb! It were well for every preacher in spirit to visit that "field-pulpit," and learn from it the Gospel, which was and is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." In the last analysis there are no "new problems." There is really only one problem, and that is *Sin*. Nor is there any "*new evangelism.*" There is only one evangel, and that is "*Jesus Christ and Him Crucified.*"

Of course, such preaching was and is "to them that are perishing, foolishness." The ridicule of the worldly-wise has always been heaped upon it from the day of Pentecost

even unto the present. Least of all did George Whitefield escape. One of his most scholarly critics, whose name is enshrined in Westminster Abbey, has described this "Prince of preachers," in language that has been applied almost verbally and literally to one of the greatest soul-winners of to-day, the Rev. William A. Sunday:

"When he began his *sermon*, the oddness of some of his *conceits*, his *manner*, and turn of *expression*, had I not been in a place of public *worship*, would have excited my laughter. As he went on I became *serious*, then *astonished*, and at length *confounded*. My confusion arose from a mixture of *sorrow and indignation*, that any man bearing the name of a *minister* of our *meek and blessed Redeemer*, or the dignity of the *Christian priesthood*, should demean himself like an inhabitant of *Bedlam*. I thought I saw human nature in distress, as much as in the cells of *lunatics*; with this difference, that he was permitted to go abroad, and make others as *mad* as himself; which he might be able to accomplish by means of the *credulity of his audience*, joined to the art of making them think that himself and his *fraternity* are the only people *in their senses*."

To this criticism Whitefield might have replied in the language of St. Paul: "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth words of truth and soberness." "For whether we are beside ourselves, it is unto God; or whether we are of sober mind, it is unto you: for the love of Christ constraineth us."

One of the most amazing miracles of modern times was "The Great Revival," of the eighteenth century, resulting in the spiritual and moral transformation of Great Britain and North America by means of the mighty preaching of George Whitefield, the Wesleys and their associates. Space permits us to give only two instances, as illustrative and typical of thousands of cases of individual and social regeneration, both in Europe and America. The historian tells us:

"When Whitefield was preaching at Exeter, a man was present who had loaded his pocket with stones, in order to fling them at that precious ambassador of Christ. He heard his prayer, however, with patience; but no sooner had he named his text, than the man pulled a stone out of his pocket, and held it in his hand, waiting for a fair opportunity to throw it. But God sent a word to his heart, and the stone dropped from his hand. After the sermon

he went to Mr. Whitefield and told him: "Sir, I came to hear you this day, with a view to break your head; but the Spirit of God, through your ministry, has given me a broken heart." The man proved to be a sound convert and lived an ornament to the Gospel."

As an instance of the moral and social regeneration of communities through the spiritual conversion of individuals and their experience of the new birth, the city of Edinburgh, and Scotland in general, furnish a fair illustration. A gentleman "eminent for learning and knowledge of the world" bore the following testimony as to the practical results of Whitefield's labors:

"Conversions were become rare in Scotland. Little liveliness was to be found even in real Christians; and bigotry and blind zeal were producing animosities and divisions, and turning away the attention of good men from matters of infinitely greater importance. The Episcopal clergy gave Whitefield no countenance, though a few of their people did. In the Established Church of Scotland, some of the more rigid Presbyterians would not hold communion with him, on account of his connection with the Church of England. Some were mightily dissatisfied with him for preaching the Calvinistic doctrines of election, original sin, efficacious grace, justification through faith, and the perseverance of the saints; and others, because he inveighed against the playhouse, dancing assemblies, games of chance, haunting taverns, vanity and extravagance in dress, and levity in behavior and conversation. But upon many in Edinburgh, of all ranks and ages, especially young people, deep impressions were made; and many of them waited on him privately, lamenting their former immoral lives, or stupid thoughtlessness about religion, and expressing their anxious concern about obtaining an interest in Christ and the sanctifying influence of the Spirit."

Six months after Whitefield's departure a minister in Edinburgh wrote:

"Since you left Scotland, numbers in different places have been awakened. Religion in this sinful city revives and flourishes. Ordinances are more punctually attended. People hear the Word with gladness, and receive it with faith and love. *New meetings for prayer and spiritual conference are being begun everywhere.* Religious conversation has banished slander and calumny from many tea-tables. Praise is perfected out of the mouths of babes

and sucklings. *Some stout-hearted sinners are captivated to the obedience of Christ.*"

Another Edinburgh minister testified:

"More than twenty praying societies have been established in this place. Amongst them are several meetings of boys and girls. There are also several meetings of young women. There are numbers of young men, who meet for the purpose of glorifying God, and promoting Christian knowledge. A good number of old men, substantial, standing Christians, meet for edification and instruction, and are thereby often revived and very much refreshed. Upon the whole, we hope, *there is such a flame kindled as shall never be extinguished.*"

Similar reports were sent in from other Scotch cities, such as Dundee, Glasgow, Dunbar, Aberdeen, etc. From the latter place a minister wrote:

"Mr. Whitefield has been the means of reviving in our city a just sense and concern for the great things of religion. I often think that the Lord sent him here, *to teach me how to preach*, and especially, *how to suffer*. While he stayed among us he answered our expectations so much, that he has scarce more friends anywhere than here, where at first, almost all were against him. The word came with so much power, that I hope, several different denominations *will bless the Lord for ever, that they ever heard him.*"

CHAPTER VIII.

His Ruling Passion.

George Whitefield might truly have joined Count Zinzendorf in declaring: "I have *one passion*; it is *Christ, only Christ*." Indeed the great English evangelist had much in common with the famous leader of the Moravians. The former, with his highly strung oratorical temperament, the latter, with his fine, poetic sensibilities, were both men of a passionate devotion to Christ and Him Crucified. Count Zinzendorf declared towards the close of his life: "*I am, as ever, a poor sinner, a captive of eternal love, running by the side of His triumphal chariot, and have no desire to be anything else as long as I live.*" George Whitefield's consecration and self-abasement were equally complete. On one of his last birthdays he wrote to a friend:

"I am now fifty-three years old. Did you ever hear of such a fifty-three years' old barren fig-tree? So much digging, so much dunging; and yet so little Fruit! *God be merciful to me a sinner! A sinner! A sinner! A sinner!* He is merciful! His mercy endureth for ever! He yet vouchsafes to bless my feeble labors."

Whitefield's description of those young Anglican clergymen, who associated themselves with him and the Wesleyes for the revival of true, apostolic religion, applies primarily to himself:

"If worldly Church preferments had been their aim, some of them, at least, might have had ladders enough to climb up by. But, having received a kind of apostolic commission at their ordination, they would fain keep up the dignity of an apostolic character; and therefore, without ever so much as designing to enter into any political cabals, or civil or Church factions, without turning to the right hand or to the left, or troubling the world with a single sermon or pamphlet on the bare *externals* of religion, they have endeavored to have but one thing in view, namely, to *think* of nothing, to *know* nothing, and to *preach* nothing but *Jesus Christ and Him Crucified*; to spend and be spent for the good of souls, and to glory in

nothing, saving in the Cross of Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto them, and they unto the world."

Whitefield's passionate devotion to Jesus Christ caused him to spend whole nights in prayer and to read Matthew Henry's large Commentary on the Bible through *four times on his knees*. He served his Lord with a consuming zeal and an utter self-abandonment of which the following is a fair illustration:

Easter Monday is a general holiday in Great Britain. The ungodly and unregenerate had perverted this festival season, as they have Christmas, to an occasion for worldliness, frivolity, and not infrequently of drunkenness, gluttony and licentiousness in general. Whitefield wrote to a friend with reference to his experience with an Easter Monday mob in the neighborhood of Moorfields:

"With a heart bleeding for so many thousands led captive by the devil at his will, on Easter Monday, at six o'clock in the morning, attended by a large congregation of praying people, I ventured to lift up a standard amongst them, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Perhaps there were about ten thousand waiting, *not for me*, but for *Satan's instruments to amuse them*. I was glad to find that, for once, I had, as it were, got the start of the devil. I mounted my field-pulpit, and almost all flocked immediately around it. I preached on these words, 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,' etc. *They gazed, they listened, they wept*. All was hushed and solemn; and I believe many felt themselves stung with deep conviction of their past sins. Being thus encouraged, I ventured out again at noon; but what a scene! The fields, the whole fields, seemed, in a bad sense of the word, all white, ready, not for the Redeemer's, but for Beelzebub's harvest. All his agents were in full motion, drummers, trumpeters, merry-andrews, masters of puppet-shows, exhibitors of wild beasts, etc., etc.—all busy in entertaining their respective auditories. I suppose there could not be less than twenty or thirty thousand people. My pulpit was fixed on the opposite side, and immediately, to their great mortification, they found the number of their attendants sadly lessened. Judging that, like St. Paul, I should now be called, as it were, to fight with beasts at Ephesus, I preached from these words: 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians.' You may easily guess, that there was some noise among the craftsmen, and that I was honored with having *stones, dirt, rotten eggs*, and

pieces of dead cats thrown at me, whilst engaged in calling them from their favorite, but lying vanities. *My soul was indeed among lions*; but far the greater part of my congregation seemed to be *turned into lambs*."

"I think, I continued in praying, preaching, and singing (for the noise at times was too great to preach) *about three hours*. We then retired to the Tabernacle. My pocket was full of notes from persons brought under concern. I read them amidst the praises and spiritual acclamations of thousands, who joined the Holy Angels in rejoicing that so many sinners were snatched, in such an unlikely place and manner, out of the very jaws of the devil. Three hundred and fifty awakened souls were received in one day; and I believe, the number of notes exceeded a thousand. The battle, that was begun on Monday, was not quite over till Wednesday evening. The Redeemer stayed my soul upon Himself, and I was not much moved, except with *compassion for those to whom I was delivering my Master's message*."

Whitefield's ruling passion, to proclaim Salvation by the Blood of the Lamb, was particularly strong in death. The following pathetic account describes his last day and hours on earth:

"On Saturday morning, September 29th, Whitefield set out from Portsmouth to Boston, with the intention of preaching at Newburyport next morning. On the way he was stopped at Exeter, fifteen miles from Portsmouth, and was prevailed upon to give a sermon to the people there. A friend said to him: "*Sir, you are more fit to go to bed than to preach*." "True, sir," replied Whitefield; and then, clasping his hands, and looking up to Heaven, he added: "Lord Jesus, I am weary in Thy work, but not of it. If I have not yet finished my course, *let me go and speak for Thee once more in the fields, seal Thy truth, and come home and die!*"

An immense multitude assembled. He mounted a hog's head. His text was: "Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith." One, who was present has thus described the preacher and his sermon:

"The subject was 'Faith and works.' He rose up sluggishly and wearily, as if worn down and exhausted by his stupendous labors. His face bloated, his voice was hoarse, his enunciation heavy. Sentence after sentence was thrown off in rough, disjointed portions, without much regard to point or beauty. At length his mind kindled, and his

lion-like voice roared to the extremities of his audience. He was speaking on the inefficiency of works to merit salvation, and suddenly cried out in a tone of thunder: '*Works! Works! A man get to Heaven by works? I would as soon think of climbing to the moon on a rope of sand!*'"

Another gentleman, who was present, wrote:

"Mr. Whitefield rose, and stood erect, and his appearance alone was a powerful sermon. He remained several minutes unable to speak; and then said: 'I will wait for the gracious assistance of God; for He will, I am certain, assist me once more to speak in His name.' He then delivered, perhaps, one of his best sermons. 'I go,' he cried, '*I go to rest prepared. My sun has arisen, and, by aid from Heaven, has given light to many. It is now about to set for—no, it is about to rise to the zenith of immortal glory. I have outlived many on earth, but they cannot outlive me in Heaven. Oh, thought divine! I soon shall be in a world, where time, age, pain and sorrow are unknown. My body fails; my spirit expands. How willingly would I live for ever to preach Christ! But I die to be WITH HIM.*'"

Whitefield's last sermon was two hours in length,—characteristic of the man, but in his present health, quite enough to kill him.

Dr. David J. Burrell has described Whitefield's master passion in a single sentence: "He was indeed possessed of a *frenzy for souls*, and was a *fanatic in his devotion to Christ.*"

Rev. Jonathan Parsons, who for the last twenty-four years had been the Presbyterian minister at Newburyport, met Whitefield at Exeter. In piety the two were kindred spirits. Mr. Parson's congregation was one of the largest in America. As a preacher, he was eminently useful. His imagination was rich, and his voice clear and commanding. He was well skilled in the Latin, Greek and Hebrew languages; and many were the seals of his faithful ministry, which closed six years after that of his friend, Whitefield's. After Whitefield's enormous sermon the two friends dined at Captain Gilman's, and then started for Newburyport. On arriving there Whitefield

was so exhausted that he was unable to leave the boat without assistance, but in the course of the evening he recovered his spirits.

While Whitefield partook of an early supper, the people assembled in front of the parsonage, and even crowded into its hall, impatient to hear a few words from the man they so greatly loved. "I am tired," said Whitefield, "and must go to bed." He took a candle, and was hastening to his chamber. The sight of the people moved him; and, pausing on the staircase, he began to speak to them. He had preached his last sermon; this was to be his last exhortation. There he stood, the crowd in the hall, gazing up at him with tearful eyes, as Elisha at the ascending prophet. His voice flowed on until the candle which he held in his hand burned away, and went out in its socket. The next morning he was not, for God had taken him."

"Mr. Richard Smith, who had accompanied Whitefield from England, and had attended him in his journeyings, followed him to his chamber. He found him reading the Bible, and with Dr. Watts' Psalms before him. Whitefield drank some water-gruel, knelt by his bed-side, engaged in prayer, and then went to rest. He slept till two in the morning, when he asked for cider, and drank a wine-glass full. "He panted for want of breath," says Mr. Smith. "I asked him how he felt. He answered, 'My asthma is returning; I must have two or three days rest. Two or three days riding, without preaching, will set me up again.' Though the window had been half up all night, he asked me to put it a little higher. 'I cannot breathe,' said he, 'but I hope I shall be better by-and-by. A good pulpit sweat to-day may give me relief. I shall be better after preaching.' I said to him, I wished he would not preach so often. He replied: 'I had rather wear out, than rust out.' He then sat up in bed and prayed that God would bless his preaching where he had been, and also bless his preaching that day, that more souls might be brought to Christ."

But his last sermon had been preached, and his last audible prayer had been offered. At five o'clock he rose to open the window wider for more air. Then he turned to his friend, Mr. Parsons, and calmly said: "*I am dying.*" "I hope not, sir!" the latter exclaimed. But the end had come, and the brave spirit passed beyond the stars at six o'clock on Sunday morning, Sept. 30th, 1770. No won-

der that when his dear friend, Charles Wesley, heard in England of Whitefield's heroic departure, he was inspired to write his famous hymn:

“Servant of God, well done!

Thy glorious warfare's past,
The battle's fought, the race is won,
And thou art crowned at last.”

CHAPTER IX.

"Dead, Yet Speaking."

George Whitefield's posthumous influence was strikingly illustrated on the very day of his death. One of his biographers tells us:

"The sensation occasioned by the sudden decease of the 'man greatly beloved' was enormous. The people came in crowds, begging to be allowed to see his corpse. Ministers of all denominations hastened to the house of Mr. Parsons, where several of them related how his ministry had been the means of their conversion. Two days before his death, he had preached at Portsmouth, and one of his hearers was a young man named Benjamin Randall, then unconverted, and also cherishing a dislike to Whitefield. 'Oh, how wonderfully he spoke!' wrote Randall. 'His soul inflamed with love his arms extended, and tears rolling from his eyes—with what power he spoke!' At noon on Sunday, a stranger was seen riding through the streets of Portsmouth, and crying at the different corners: '*Whitefield is dead! Whitefield is dead!*'" Young Randall heard the announcement. It pierced his heart. He afterwards wrote:

"It was September 30, 1770,—that memorable day! That blessed day to Whitefield! That blessed day to me! A voice sounded through my soul, more loud and startling than ever thunder pealed upon my ears, "*Whitefield is dead!*" *Whitefield is now in Heaven, but I am on the road to hell!* He was a man of God, and yet I reviled him. He taught me the way to Heaven, but I regarded it not. *Oh that I could hear his voice again!*"

Whitefield's death led to Randall's conversion. He became a Baptist minister, and founded the Free-Will Baptist denomination.

Among the millions of Christians who have sung the hymn beginning "Come thou fount of every blessing!" perhaps not one in a thousand is aware of Whitefield's part in its composition. If it had not been for him, humanly speaking, that popular song might never have been written. The story of its author's conversion sounds al-

most like a romance, but the facts are fully established, and are herewith presented as forming a small part of Whitefield's posthumous influence.

"A young man of the city of Norwich, about eighteen years of age, was walking one morning with a party of other young men, who had all agreed to make that day a holiday. The first object, that attracted their attention, was an old woman who pretended to tell fortunes. They immediately employed her to tell theirs, and that they might fully qualify her for the undertaking, first made her thoroughly intoxicated with spirituous liquor. The young man, of whom mention was first made, was informed, among other things, that he would live to a very old age, and see his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, growing up around him. Though he had assisted in qualifying the old woman for the fraud by intoxicating her, yet he had credulity enough to be struck with these parts of her predictions, which related to himself. "And so," quoth he, when alone, "I am to see children, and grandchildren, and great-grandchildren! At that age I must be a burden to the young people. What shall I do? There is no way for an old man to render himself more agreeable to youth, than by sitting and telling them pleasant and profitable stories. I will then during my youth endeavor to store my mind with all kinds of knowledge. I will see and hear, and note down everything that is rare and wonderful, that I may sit, when incapable of other employment, and entertain my descendants. Thus shall my company be rendered pleasant, and I shall be respected rather than neglected in old age. Let me see what I can acquire first? *Oh! Here is the famous Methodist preacher, Whitefield! He is to preach, they say, to-night. I will go and hear him.*"

From these strange motives the young man declared he went to hear Whitefield. He preached that evening from Matthew 3:7, "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

"Mr. Whitefield," said the young man, "described the Sadducean character. This did not touch me. I thought myself as good a Christian as any man in England. From this he went to that of the Pharisees. He described their exterior decency, but observed that the poison of the viper rankled in their hearts. This rather shook me. At

length, in the course of his sermon, he abruptly broke off, paused a few moments; then burst into a flood of tears; lifted up his hands and eyes, and exclaimed: "O my hearers! *The wrath's to come! The wrath's to come!*" These words sank into my heart like lead in the waters. I wept, and when the sermon was ended, retired alone. For days and weeks I could think of little else. Those awful words would follow me, wherever I went, "*The wrath's to come! The wrath's to come!*"

The result was that the young man soon after made a public profession of conversion and in a little time became a powerful preacher,—the predecessor and inspirer of the great Baptist pulpit orator Robert Hall, who in turn was the "inspirer of Spurgeon." But Whitefield's famous convert, Robert Robinson, is best known as the author of two of the most popular hymns in the English language, viz.:

"Mighty God! while angels bless Thee,
May a mortal lisp Thy name?"

as also the still better known song before mentioned,

"Come thou fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace!"

George Whitefield, though dead, still speaks and influences mankind, not only by his matchless life and labors, but also by his published discourses. It has been customary in certain quarters to belittle Whitefield's printed sermons. They are said to prove a disappointment in view of his supremacy as a pulpit orator. Perhaps a saying of Charles James Fox, whom Edmund Burke called "the most brilliant and accomplished debater that the world ever saw," may be applied to Whitefield's sermons, viz.: "*Does the speech read well? If so, it was a failure.*" If his sermons lacked the clear-cut and incisive logic of John Wesley and the grand oratorical periods of Robert Hall, they possess certain other qualities, which more than make up for the want of academic precision and style. A prominent Edinburgh minister recently bore the following testimony to the mighty influence of Whitefield's life and sermons:

"I have in my library a small volume bearing the modest title "*A Life of George Whitefield,*" which has been in my possession ever since I came to a knowledge of Christ, now over twenty-six years ago. This book is very much worn, thumb-marked, penciled and rebound. Its intrinsic value is not more than twelve cents, but to me

it is more precious than rubies. This particular book I carried in my pocket and snatched a few sentences on my way to and from business, and at odd intervals during the day. Gradually *the story of this master-evangelist* gripped my young heart and finally it broke upon me as a revelation of what God can do through the consecrated life of one man. From the days of my youth up *no evangelist or preacher has ever fired my enthusiasm for preaching, fed my passion for souls, or furnished my heart with material for praise more than this seraphic evangelist.* To this day, although so many long years have passed, he exercises over my life and ministry a strange and magnetic influence too wonderful for words. The name of Whitefield captivates me. My ears are attent as soon as it is mentioned. I eagerly devour all I can lay my hands upon that is written of him. The only volume of his addresses, which I have been able to get, contains seventy-five sermons, and this is never beyond arm's reach. "*In these sermons,*" said Spurgeon, "*one perceives the coals of Jupiter and hot thunderbolts, which mark him out to be a true Boanerges.*" I may be forgiven my passion for my subject. My soul has been too often stirred to its depths as I have companied with this man of God to indulge in any cold calculation of his worth. *When shall the world see his like again? He is my hero! He is my inspiration! 'He being dead yet speaketh' to me!*"

And as Mr. Joseph Kemp, the writer of these stirring lines, exercises his successful ministry, not only in Great Britain, but also in the Bible Institutes of New York, Chicago, Northfield, etc., we may be sure that the mighty message of Whitefield, which Wesley defined as "*The New Birth and Justification by Faith,*" will once more be heard in all its fulness and power. But let us hear the great preacher himself. "*He being dead, yet speaketh.*" The two following extracts from his sermons show us the wide range of his preaching and his powers. In the first he exposes the hypocrisy of many professed Christians, while in the second he pleads with poor sinners to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. In both quotations we note his consuming passion for Christ and holiness, and that, like Alleine, "*he was insatiably greedy after souls.*"

INNOCENT DIVERSIONS.

"They talk of diversions and recreations! For my part I know of no diversion but that of doing good. If you can find any diversion which is not contrary to your

baptismal vow,—of renouncing the pomps and vanities of this wicked world; if you can find any diversion, which tends to the glory of God; if you can find any diversion, which you would be willing to be found at by the Lord Jesus Christ, I give you free license to go to *them*. But if, on the contrary, they are found to keep sinners from coming to the Lord Jesus Christ; if they are a means to harden the heart, and such as you would not willingly be found in when you come to die, then, my dear brethren, *keep from them*. Many of you may think I have gone too far, but I shall go a great deal farther yet. I will attack the devil in his strongest holds, and bear my testimony against our *fashionable and polite entertainments*. What pleasure is there in spending several hours at *cards*? Is it not mis-spending your precious time, which should be spent in working out your salvation with fear and trembling? Do *play-houses, horse-racing, balls and assemblies* tend to *promote the glory of God*? Would you be willing to have your souls demanded of you while you are at one of *those places*? What good can come from a *horse-race*, from abusing God Almighty's creatures, and putting them to a use He never designed them? The *play-houses* (theatres) are *nurseries of debauchery*, and the *supporters* of them are encouragers and *promoters of all the evil* that is done there. They are the *bane of the age*, and will be *the destruction of the frequenters of them*. Is it not high time for the true ministers of Jesus Christ to lift up their voices as a trumpet, and *cry aloud against the diversions of the age*?"

PERORATION OF SERMON.

"Come, all of you, come, and behold Him stretched out for you! See His hands and feet nailed to the Cross! Oh, come, *come*, my brethren, and *nail your sins thereto*! Come, *come* and see His side pierced! There is a fountain open for sin and for uncleanness. Oh, wash, *wash*, and be clean! Come and see His head crowned with thorns,—and *all for you*. Can you think of a panting, bleeding, dying Jesus, and not be filled with pity towards Him? He underwent all this for you. Come unto Him by faith; *lay hold on Him*! There is *mercy for every soul* of you that will come unto Him. Then do not delay! Fly unto the arms of this Jesus and you shall *be made clean in His Blood*!

Oh, what shall I say unto you, to make you come to Jesus? I have showed you the dreadful consequences of

not repenting of your sins; and if, after all I have said, you are resolved to perish, *your blood will be required at your own hands.* But I hope better things of you, and things that accompany salvation. Let me beg of you to *pray in good earnest for the grace of repentance.* I may never see your faces again; but at the day of judgment I will meet you. There you will either bless God that ever you were moved to repentance; or else this sermon, *though in a field,* will be as a *swift witness against you.* Repent, *repent,* therefore, my dear brethren, as John the Baptist, and our blessed Redeemer Himself earnestly exhorted, and *turn from your evil ways, and the Lord will have mercy upon you!"*

CHAPTER X.

His Works Following Him.

Benjamin Franklin's tribute to George Whitefield is very remarkable and significant:

"He was a preacher who could, at any time and anywhere, collect in the open air, an audience of many thousands, without offering a single heretical novelty. I knew him intimately upwards of thirty years. His integrity, disinterestedness, and indefatigable zeal in prosecuting every good work, I have never seen equalled, and shall never see excelled."

Amongst Whitefield's many good works, which followed him, was his famous Orphanage near Savannah, Georgia. His biographer tells us:

"The first Christians, who left Europe to advance the spiritual interests of Georgia were Moravians, and the next were the Wesleys. On Sept. 14th, 1735, Charles Wesley was appointed "Secretary for the Indian affairs in Georgia," and a few weeks afterwards John Wesley was appointed "Missionary at Savannah."

About a year later George Whitefield received the following letter from his good friend, John Wesley:

"Only Mr. Delmotte is with me till God shall stir up the hearts of some of His servants, who, putting their lives in their hands, shall come over and help us, where the harvest is so great, and the laborers so few. *What if thou art the man, Mr. Whitefield?* Do you ask me what you shall have? Food to eat, and raiment to put on, a house to lay your head in—such as our Lord had not—and a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

When the youthful preacher read this fiery appeal, he said: "My heart leaped within me, and as it were echoed to the call."

And thus, turning his back on "a lucrative curacy in London," the most popular pulpit orator of that day set out for Georgia to become a missionary to the Indians and an itinerant Evangelist to the English-speaking world.

Where the Wesleys had failed Whitefield succeeded. His ministry in Georgia led to the erection of an orphanage,

for which he collected during his evangelistic career upwards of \$75,000.00—an immense amount in those days.

A few years after Whitefield's death the large buildings were almost entirely destroyed by fire. But one of his biographers has well said:

"If the ostensible design of the institution had failed, it had accomplished a greater result, which was destined never to fail; for it had been the centre of American attraction to its founder, had prompted his thirteen passages across the Atlantic, and had thus led to those extraordinary travels and labors from Georgia to Maine, which quickened with spiritual life the Protestantism of a Continent." No wonder that when the news of Whitefield's death had travelled from Massachusetts to Georgia, the people of the latter State were profoundly moved. "All the black cloth in the Colony was bought up. The pulpit and desk, the chandeliers and organ, the pews of the Governor and Council in the Church at Savannah were draped with mourning; and the Governor and Members of the two Houses of Assembly went in procession to the Church, and were received by the organ playing a funeral dirge. A sum of money was unanimously voted for the removal of Whitefield's remains to Georgia, to be interred at his Orphan House; but the people of Newburyport strongly objected, and the design had to be relinquished. Forty-five years later, however, when a new County was formed in Georgia, it received the name of Whitefield, in memory of his worth and useful services."

Another memorial of George Whitefield is found in Northampton County, Pa. God put it into his heart to establish a school for Negroes in Pennsylvania, because, as he said, "the Negroes meet there with the best usage, and I believe many of my acquaintances will either give me or let me purchase their young slaves at a very easy rate. I intend taking up a tract of land far back in the country." The friend, who assisted him in his evangelistic labors and who was his financial backer in this large undertaking, was William Seward, who under the date of April 22, 1714, made the following entry in his journal: "Agreed with Mr. Allen for five thousand acres of land on the Forks of the Delaware at £2,200 sterling; the conveyance to be made to Mr. Whitefield, and after that assigned to me, as security for my advancing the money."

The land had been selected as well as the town site, (which Whitefield named Nazareth), and Moravian car-

penters were busy erecting the school, when the whole of this benevolent design collapsed. His good friend, Mr. Seward, had returned to England in order to complete this large financial transaction, when one day as he was holding an open-air meeting, a brutal mob attacked him, and inflicted injuries from which he soon died,—thus joining “the noble army of martyrs,” who overcame by the Blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.” Whitefield, having no means of his own transferred the property to Count Zinzendorf, and thus Northampton County, instead of being settled by pious members of the Church of England became largely populated by godly Germans, at that time chiefly connected with the Moravian Church. The name of the great English Evangelist is still perpetuated in Nazareth by the historic Whitefield House (the building he intended for a Negro school), also by a Whitefield Lodge, and by a Whitefield Street.

But his works in America are following him in many other respects, as well as in many other localities. An eminent Church historian writes of Whitefield’s influence in America in the following weighty sentences:

“His preaching, and especially his volume of sermons as read by Morris, founded the Presbyterian Church in Virginia; for, before that period, there was not a Dissenting minister in the colony. In the Middle States, Whitefield’s labors had a profound effect. He was an Apostle to Philadelphia; he rallied around him its preachers, and stimulated them by his example. In New Jersey and New York he exerted a similar influence; and the frequent repetition of his visits through about thirty years did not allow the evangelical interests of the churches to decline. The ministers in the Synod of New York more than tripled in seven years after his first visit. In New England one hundred and fifty Congregational churches were founded in less than twenty years and more than forty thousand souls were converted. The effects of the great revival, of which Whitefield had thus become the ostensible representative, have been profound and permanent. The Protestantism of the United States has taken its subsequent character from it. The effect of the Awakening on the character of the ministers was one of its greatest results. It made personal regeneration a requisite among the qualifications for the Christian ministry. It gave origin to Princeton College and its distinguished

Theological Seminary, and also to Dartmouth College; for both were founded by Whitefield's followers."

The great German theologian, Professor August Tholuck, of Halle, once said to the distinguished American preacher and lecturer,—Dr. Joseph Cook:

"George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards and their successors drew the distinction between the converted and the unconverted in the minds of American evangelical churches so deeply that it is a justifiable hope that it will never be erased. They secured such reforms in the early churches of New England that only the regenerate were admitted to the Lord's Supper; only the converted constituted the church-membership. That distinction and custom are worth more to your American civilization than all your political constitutions, State and national."

George Whitefield founded no societies and formed no separate denomination; but he set forces in motion, whose mighty influences are felt even unto the present. His friends and followers became the leaders of the evangelical and evangelistic forces among all the Protestant denominations. Next to the Wesleys it may truly be said that Whitefield was the chief inspirer of the great *Methodist movement* in Great Britain and America. The history of the *Evangelical Party* in the Church of England is inseparably connected with George Whitefield, the spiritual father and fore-runner of men like Berridge, Venn, Romaine, Newton, Simeon, Ryle and Moule. *The Churches of Scotland* are similarly indebted to Whitefield. *In Wales*, though not the founder of the Calvinistic Methodists, he was for many years their moderator, and the recent great Welsh Revival, as also other famous spiritual quickenings in that Principality, may be traced to the influence of Whitefield. His fellow-townsmen and warm personal friend, Robert Raikes, began the modern *Sunday-school movement*. Other fruits of "*The Great Revival*" may be found in the formation of the great *American and British Bible Societies*, and other world-wide reform movements, such as the abolition of slavery, for "*William Wilberforce owed his first religious impressions to the preaching of Whitefield.*"

Finally, it may with truth be said that Whitefield's works are following him in the marvellous results of *Modern Evangelism*. He was the pioneer in that particular sphere of labor, which has for its special object spiritual awakenings and revivals. George Whitefield's influence

is most strongly felt in the lives and successful labors of men like Nettleton, Finney, General Booth, the Aitkens, Moody, Gipsy Smith, Torrey, Chapman and Sunday.

It is to such Evangelists, humanly speaking, that thousands of the children of God in all the churches are in these days looking for deliverance not only from the floods of worldliness and vice, which are threatening the very foundations of society, but also from the false teachings of so many pulpits and theological seminaries, where rationalism and higher criticism are attempting to blast what Gladstone called "the impregnable rock of Holy Scriptures."

Would to God that all preachers, Sunday-school teachers and Christian workers in general might return to the proclamation of those "grand doctrines of grace," where-with George Whitefield and the Wesleys wrought such a great deliverance in their day and generation! What a change there would be in the sermons, religious periodicals, Sunday-school publications and Y. M. C. A. literature of our times if there might come a gracious revival of the teaching of those *essentials of Christianity, those fundamental and vital doctrines of our faith*, which were preached so faithfully and so fearlessly not only by these great Evangelists, but also by the Reformers, Martyrs and Apostles!

A brief extract from Whitefield's funeral sermon as preached by his friend John Wesley, may form a fitting close to these studies in "*Lessons from the Life*" of the great Evangelist:

"Let us improve Whitefield's death by keeping close to the great doctrines which he delivered, and by drinking into his spirit. These fundamental and vital doctrines are:

"There is no power by nature, and no merit in man. All power to think, speak, or act aright, is in and from the Spirit of Christ; and all merit is in the Blood of Christ. All men are dead in trespasses and sins; all are by nature children of wrath; all are guilty before God, liable to death, temporal and eternal. We become interested in what Christ has done and suffered, not by works, lest any man should boast; but by faith alone. We conclude, says the Apostle, that a man is justified by faith, without the works of the law. And to as many as thus receive Christ, giveth He power to become the sons of God; even to those that believe on His Name; who are born not of the will

-of men, but of God. And *except a man be thus born again*, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. But all, who are thus born of the Spirit, have the Kingdom of God within them. That mind is in them which was in Christ Jesus, enabling them to walk as Christ also walked. His indwelling Spirit makes them both *holy in heart*, and *holy in all manner of conversation*. But still, seeing all this is a free gift through *the Righteousness and Blood of Christ*, there is eternally the same reason to remember, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." You are not ignorant that these are the fundamental doctrines, which he everywhere insisted on. And may they not be summed up, as it were, in two words: "*The New Birth*," and "*Justification By Faith*?" These let us insist upon, with all Boldness, at all Times, and in all Places!"

"His only Righteousness I show,
His saving Truth proclaim;
'Tis all my business here below
To cry: "Behold the Lamb!"

"Happy, if with my latest breath
I may but gasp His Name;
Preach Him to all, and cry in death,
"Behold, Behold the Lamb!"

—Charles Wesley.

THE END.

TESTIMONIALS.

Second Edition.—April, 1915.—

"Many thanks for your book, "Lessons from the Life of George Whitefield." It is great—all meat without bone." (Harry Monroe, Superintendent Pacific Garden Mission, Chicago.)

"I am very glad to have "Lessons from the Life of George Whitefield," and will do what I can to recommend it to others; for it is certainly a book that will do good to all who read it. God bless you for the work you have done and the time spent in bringing the lessons from the life of this noble servant of Christ within such convenient reach of all." (Rt. Rev. C. L. Moench, D. D., President Provincial Elders Conference, Bethlehem, Pa.)

"I was very glad, indeed, to receive the reprint on "George Whitefield." I have read with much interest the chapters as they appeared in "The Moravian." (Provost Edgar F. Smith, University of Pennsylvania.)

"I take pleasure in enclosing you herewith check for \$., account of the publication of your book and trust it may result in blessed fruitfulness." (Charles L. Huston, Coatesville, Pa.)

"Have sold twenty five copies. The book should be in the hands of all that seek salvation. It is short and to the point." Lewis A. Andrews, Bethlehem, Pa.)

"I am in receipt of the booklet on George Whitefield, which I have read with very great interest and delight. I am sure the circulation of this book is bound to do great good." (Rev. Henry W. Stough, D. D., Evangelist.)

"Dr. Gray asked me to look over your pamphlet on George Whitefield, and I am sending a review of it to The Christian Workers Magazine. It is indeed highly interesting and should stimulate zeal in the service of the Master." (L. W. Gosnell, Assistant to the Dean, Moody Bible Institute.)

One Copy	\$.25
Twelve Copies	2.00
Twenty Copies	3.00
Fifty Copies	6.00
One Hundred Copies	10.00

Address author

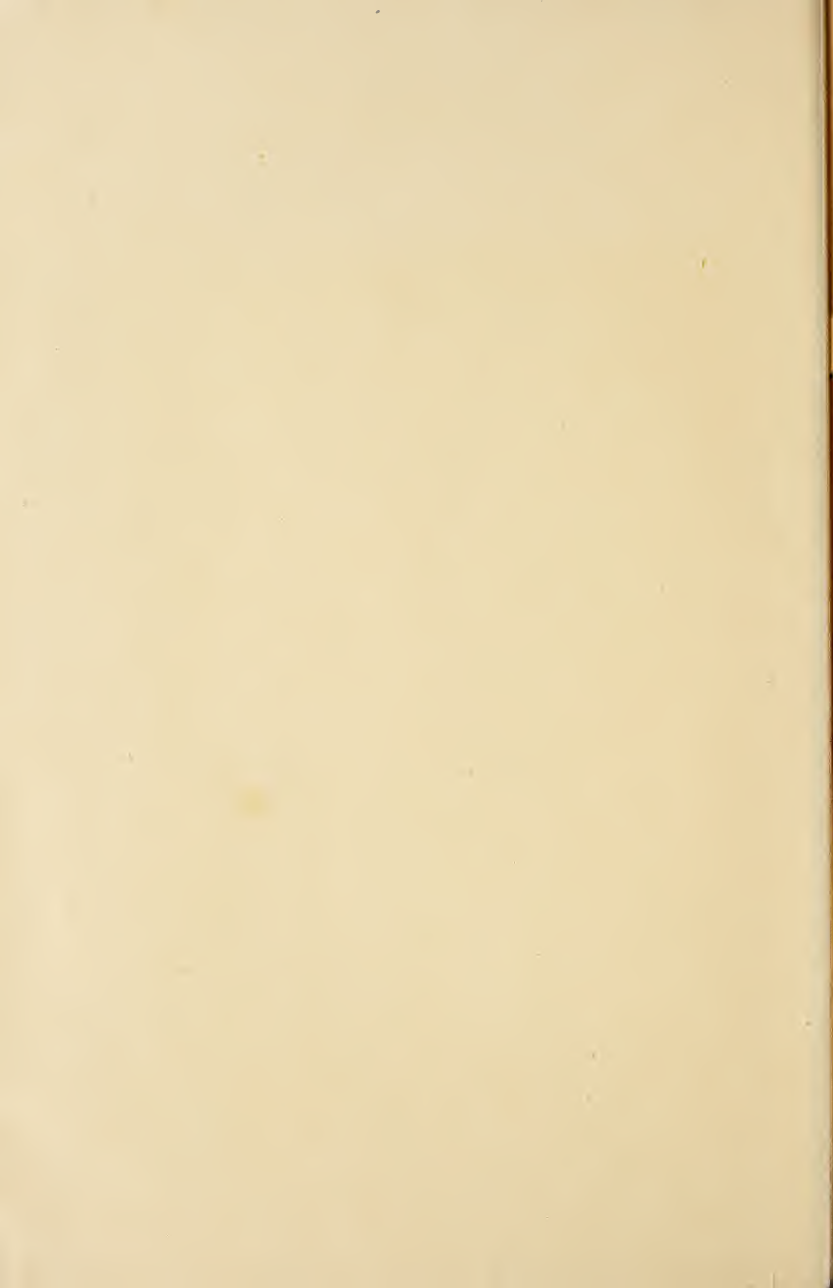
347 Jay Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.











GOULD LIBRARY

Eastern Nazarene College

NEASE LIBRARY EASTERN NAZARENE COLLEGE
BX9225.W4 G73 1915 GOULD
Greenfield, John/Lessons from the life o



3 2999 00042 1417

